

A CENTRAL AFRICAN VILLAGE NEAR BANDAWE.

A PLEA  
FOR  
THE LIVINGSTONIA MISSION  
OF THE FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY THE  
CONVENER OF THE FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE.

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**I**N the 4th of May, 1873, David Livingstone died on his knees at *Ilala*, near Bangweolo. His faithful attendants brought the body and the journals of the great missionary home to England; and their arrival sent a thrill through the civilized world, which did more for Africa than many years of Livingstone's life. Men read that the last words he had written were: "All that I can say in my solitude is, May Heaven's

richest blessing come down on every one—American, English, or Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world”.

The open sore of the world was the Central Africa slave-trade, and Livingstone had pointed out how it could be healed. He had discovered



GRAVE OF MRS. LIVINGSTONE.

that there was a great central water-way running through Africa from south to north. This water-way began at the mouth of the great river Zambesi; it went up the Shiré, a tributary of the Zambesi; it broadened out in the great inland lakes of Nyasa, Tanganyika, and Victoria Nyanza; and then contracted again in the upper waters of the Nile. It had three gaps of land, which could be bridged by roads: one in the Shiré highlands, another along

the Tanganyika plateau, and a third between the Victoria Nyanza and Tanganyika. "Use this great highway which God has formed," said Livingstone; "plant mission-stations along its course; establish trading-posts, and set Christian men over them; and in this way the running sore of Africa will be healed."

This is not the place to tell how, in their first enthusiasm, statesmen, merchants, and, above all, the various branches of the Christian Church, pressed forward to do the work in the way Livingstone suggested. Our Livingstonia Mission had its birth in that time of enthusiasm.

Our Mission was established on the shore of Lake Nyasa just twenty years ago. Our missionaries had to face unusual perils: savages constantly at war with each other; marauding Arabs, the scourge of Central Africa; and, above all, the dangers of a climate deadly to many Europeans. There is many a missionary's grave in Nyasaland, and these graves are Christ's title-deeds to testify that the district has been taken possession of in His name.

The first station was at Cape Maclear, near the south end of the lake. It proved very unhealthy, and had to be abandoned. Readers may recollect Professor Drummond's description of the spot.

"Magnificent mountains of granite, green to the summit with forest, encircle it, and on the silver sand of a little bay stood the small row of trim white cottages. A neat path through a small garden led up to the settlement, and I approached the largest house and entered. It was the Livingstonia manse—the head missionary's house. It was spotlessly clean, English furniture was in the room, a medicine-chest, familiar-looking dishes were in the cupboards, books lying about, but there was no missionary in it. I went into the next house. It was the school; the benches were there, and the blackboard, but there were no scholars and no teacher. I passed to the next, and to the next, all in perfect order, and all *empty*. Then a native approached and led me a few yards into the forest. And there among the mimosa trees, under a huge granite mountain, were four or five graves. These were the missionaries'.

". . . A hundred and fifty miles north, on the same lake-coast, the remnant of the missionaries have begun their task again, and there slowly, against fearful odds, they are carrying on their work."

The new station is called Bandawe, and from it has spread a work which has been marvellous in the history of missions. The place seemed healthier than any on the lake shore, the neighbourhood was populous, and the people



needed protection. The hill country to the west was inhabited by wild Angoni tribes. Tradition says that these Angoni are Zulus, whose forefathers had fought their way north and settled on these hills. Years ago, a fierce chief called Chaka ruled over the Zulus of Natal. He resolved to make his nation a race of fighters. He enrolled all the men in regiments, and drilled and practised them in constant warfare. He fought with his neighbours on all sides, and conquered them. In his old age he was as



A WANKONDE HUT—NORTH END OF LAKE NYASA.

bloodthirsty as ever, but no longer went out in person to battle. He would order some of his regiments to get ready for war, and then launched them against some distant tribe. If his army came back beaten, he was accustomed to slay every tenth man of the survivors in cold blood. There is a story that on one occasion, when an army returned very badly beaten, he collected the rest of his troops and slaughtered every one of the defeated warriors. It is also said that after this no Zulu army that had been defeated dared return home. They fought their way north, and won for themselves other lands, where the wrath of their king could not reach them. Some of these Zulus, it is believed, were the forefathers of the Angoni tribes. They brought with them the old military organization, and became the scourge of the more peaceable peoples for miles round.

One of our missionaries was once near enough the scene of an Angoni

raid to describe it. A band of Angoni stealthily surrounded by night the village of Kayume, which lies on the lake shore. They had no dispute with chief or people; their one motive was to slay the men and capture the women. The night was moonless, and the darkness favoured their approach. Entering the village a warrior stationed himself at the door of every hut, and ordered the inmates to come out. Every man and boy was speared as he rushed forth, and the women and girls were caught and bound with bark ropes. In the morning not a man nor a boy remained alive, and three hundred women and girls were tied and huddled together like so many sheep. The Angoni feasted all day on the food and beer which they found in the village. The place was near an African Lakes Company Station, and when the manager heard the dreadful news he hastily armed his porters, and set off in hopes of rescuing the poor women. When the Angoni found themselves surprised, they resolved to butcher their captives before they took flight.

"Then followed a horrible scene—women screaming, women wrestling for life with armed savages, women and girls writhing in blood on the ground." The rescue party came on fast, there was a short, sharp fight, and two hundred women were saved alive.

Our missionaries deliberately placed themselves between the people of the lake shore and these bloodthirsty warriors.

There were sights in Nyasaland more horrible even than Angoni raids. The Arab slaver had made it his favourite hunting ground. The Rev. J. Alexander Bain, who really gave his life to protect his people from these Arab raiders, wrote home in 1889:—"At daybreak (Friday, April 15th) we were roused from our sleep by a number of shots fired in rapid succession and at no great distance. We were told that Arabs had attacked a neighbouring village. They had completely surprised the people. The men, scarcely awake, had tried to defend themselves, but were killed or driven off, and upwards of thirty women with their babies and a great many young girls were captured. The miscreants, having securely entrenched themselves in a stockade of bamboos and banana stems, settled down to enjoy themselves in their own brutish way, gorging themselves on the spoil, and glutting their savage lust by outraging the women and the girls. Two young children, who disturbed their beastly revels, were flung into the flames of some burning-houses."

These hunters of human flesh took their victims to the coast, making them ivory carriers, and meaning to sell as slaves all who survived the horrors of the long march. Mr. F. Moir saw a slave caravan on the march, and has told

us what it was like. "Behind the Arab came groups of wives and household servants, laughing and talking as they passed along, carrying the camp utensils and other impedimenta of their masters. After that the main rabble of the caravan, the men armed with guns, spears, and axes. Ominously prominent among the loads were many slave sticks, to be handy if any turned refractory or if any likely strangers were met. Mingling with and guarded by them, came the wretched, overburdened, tied-up slaves. The men, who might still have some spirit to try to escape, were driven, tied two by two, in the terrible *goree* or taming stick, or in gangs of about half-a-dozen, each with an iron collar let into a long iron chain, many of them soon after their start already staggering under their loads. And the women! I can hardly trust myself to think or speak of them. They were fastened to chains or thick bark ropes; many of them carried, in addition to their loads of grain or ivory, little brown babies, dear to their hearts as a white woman's child to hers. The double burden was almost too much, and still they struggled wearily on, knowing too well that when they showed signs of fatigue, not the slaver's ivory, but the living child would be torn from them and thrown aside to die. One poor woman I could not help noticing. She was carrying a biggish boy, who should have been walking, but whose thin legs had evidently given way; she was tottering under the burden. It was the last supreme effort of a mother's love, and was all in vain. The child, easily recognizable, was brought into camp a couple of hours later by one of my hunters, who had found him on the path. We had him cared for, but his mother would never know."

The hyenas and the leopards follow these caravans regularly to feast on the slaves who drop on the march, and on the children who are thrown into the bushes. Four-fifths of these poor creatures, who form the slave-gang, die before they reach the coast.

A third horror, which was universally prevalent, was the poison ordeal. The only religion of the peoples of Nyasaland is the fear of evil spirits. If a chief becomes ill, if some valuable animal dies, if a village refuses its usual tribute,—any ill, great or small, is at once set down to the action of evil spirits, who, by witchcraft, have been summoned to send the calamity. In such a case the accused are compelled to have their innocence or guilt tested by drinking the *muavi* poison. Whole villages have to undergo the ordeal.

"We passed a village", wrote one of our missionaries, "where no less than thirty people had died from the effects of the *muavi* poison ordeal. When persons are accused of witchcraft, they are compelled to take the *muavi*, a



poisonous drink concocted from the bark of a tree by the witch-doctors. If they put it up they are supposed to be innocent; if they die they are considered to have been guilty. A great many persons had been accused and had been compelled to drink the poison. Thirty had died, and their unburied bodies, many of them skeletons, were lying scattered near the path, a feast for the vultures and the hyenas. It was a horrible sight! May the Gospel chase away such ignorance and superstition." The ordeal spares no one. "Another muavi-drinking took place last Friday, at which two of our school girls—little things of ten and eleven—and a woman died."

These were the permanent horrors of the land where our missionaries settled twenty-one years ago. They found, as Livingstone had done, that the Arab slave-raider was the worst of the three. The Arab got his slaves in many ways besides by burning villages. Chiefs were ready to sell their subjects; parents their children; and husbands their wives. When the headquarters of the mission was transferred to Bandawe in 1880, the following was the current price-list for slaves in Nyasaland:—

A strong young Man, ...	...	40 yards of calico.
A young unmarried School-girl,	...	56 yards of calico.
A young Mother, ...	...	36 yards of calico.
Her child with her, extra, ...	...	4 yards of calico.
An elderly Man or Woman, ...	...	4 yards of calico.
A toothless old Man, ...	...	2 yards of calico.

In the year 1881 the permanent buildings required for the mission were erected and occupied at Bandawe, and the work which had been carried on there for a few years previously was steadily developed. Our missionaries were for the most part medical men, and a knowledge of medicine and especially of surgery had undoubtedly a great deal to do with the rapid progress made in winning the confidence and the affection of the people. Schools were opened for the young, who at first had to be bribed by small presents to attend; industrial work was prominent from the first; the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached by precept and example. At last after many days the harvest time began. Seven young men and two young women, the first-fruits of Nyasaland, were received into the Christian Church in baptism and were admitted to the Lord's table. Professor Drummond, who visited Bandawe in 1883, says:—"I cherish no more sacred memory of my life than that of a communion service in the little Bandawe church, when the sacramental cup was handed to me by the bare black arm of a native communicant

—a communicant whose life, tested afterwards in many an hour of trial with me on the Tanganyika plateau, gave him perhaps a better right to be there than any of us.”

The Atonga of Bandawe had to be protected, so far as the missionaries could, from the Angoni on the neighbouring hills, and in 1882 Dr. Laws paid



NATIVE DHOWS ON LAKE TANGANYIKA.

a visit to the fierce chief of these bloodthirsty warriors. He succeeded in getting leave from the chief to erect a mission house about two miles distant from the chief's village; and also in getting him to promise not to raid the Atonga. How he did it I do not know. It was not his guns; for he had none. It was not his imposing retinue; for he had simply a few Atonga porters to carry his provisions and requirements. It was simply himself. Our old mission reports contain stories of interviews with savage warrior chiefs which read like the tales early Church History tells of the dealings of Leo of Rome with the barbarian Huns. After this interview, although



attacks were more than once threatened, the Angoni never again made any of their bloody raids on the Atonga at Bandawe.

The work among the Angoni was long, arduous, and disappointing. It needed much Christian heroism to attempt to do mission work among that fierce and savage people. Murder and theft were almost everyday occurrences. A woman carrying a pot of beer would be killed in broad daylight to get the beer and to prevent detection. The missionary would hear a



ON THE MARCH TO ANGONI-LAND.

scream in the evening, and was told that a poor worn-out slave had been exposed to the hyenas. God's messenger was there on sufferance. The tribe knew the advantage of having a doctor among them; they were able to buy calico and beads; they were pleased that a white man should honour them with his presence; but they did not wish for any instruction. Dr. Elmslie was not allowed to open even a Sunday school.

In his earlier interviews with the headmen they professed their willingness to learn the Word of God, but when it was explained that the Word taught that it was wrong to murder and to steal, they declared that if the children

were taught such things they would grow up cowards, and fail to uphold the honour of the tribe, whose foundation was the spear and the shield. They then proposed that the missionary should allow them to make one great raid, and should pray for their success. If they returned successful the missionary would share the spoils, and the whole tribe would be commanded to receive the Word of God. When this very characteristic proposal was refused they forbade any teaching whatever. Three young lads, who came secretly by night, in fear of death, were Dr. Elmslie's only pupils.

In the beginning of 1886 there came a great drought, and the witch doctors made all manner of incantations to bring the rain. At last the headmen came to Dr. Elmslie, and asked him to "make rain". He told them that rain was in God's hands and not in his, but explained that every year in his own land of Scotland Christian people united to thank God for the harvest. He said that God heard prayers, though He sometimes did not answer as men wanted Him to do; that He knew what was best. He had a most attentive audience. He then told the assembled headmen that he would ask his God to send them rain, and that perhaps God would hear and answer in the way they wished his prayers. Rain fell abundantly next day, and this was the beginning of open and encouraging work in Angoni-land. The secret little night school with its three pupils became a day school which soon became full of scholars. Grown men and women began to wish to be able to read the Word of God for themselves. Noted warriors and married women with their babies came to spell out painfully, from *Step by Step*, such sentences as "The dog ate our porridge", "The dog bit the monkey". This was the beginning of the overthrow of the fierce warlike pride of this savage people.

Meanwhile the Mission had been extending in other places. The lamented Rev. J. Alexander Bain began work on a station near the Stevenson Road, between Lakes Nyasa and Tanganyika. Dr. Laws had also paid a visit to Chikusi, the chief of the South Angoni, and got leave to send a missionary there. While waiting for the missionary, the first convert in Nyasaland, Albert Namalambe, was sent up to hold the fort in Chikusi's country. He wrote a graphic letter to Dr. Laws about his reception—a letter interesting in itself, and doubly so when we remember who the writer was. He had sent word that he was coming to tell the people that the white men wished to come into their country. Ten headmen and hundreds of the common people gathered to hear him. Some of the common people wished to kill Albert at once, but the headmen would not permit them. "Then all the people were angry with us because the headmen refused to kill us. They then asked,

‘What are you come for?’ We said, ‘The white men have sent us saying: Go to Chikusi—say that the white men are coming to teach the Word of God; to give sick people medicine, and to teach their children the letters’. Then they asked and said: ‘Is the white man Dr. Laws? If it is he, we know that it is well; but if it is another we do not wish it.’” In the end, Dr. Henry, who with his wife did noble work and died martyrs to the climate, was settled among the South Angoni.

The Dutch Reformed Church of Cape Colony resolved to join us in our Mission on Lake Nyasa. They settled their missionaries between Bandawe and Chikusi’s. Now they have undertaken to work Chikusi’s country, and that station has been handed over to them.

The methods of work have been the same at all our stations; and from the first native believers have been used to carry the Gospel to their heathen neighbours. What is said of one may be taken as the type of work at all our stations in Livingstonia.

Perhaps the medical work, which showed to the eye that the sick and the sorrowful ought to be cared for and sympathized with, was that part of our missionaries’ labours which first taught the poor people what Christianity was like. Why should men who were strangers, who belonged to a different and manifestly superior race, come from a far country, not to take their land nor to seize their cattle, but to tend them in sickness, and astonish them with the wonderful cures they performed? Why, unless it was really as they said, that their God, who was full of mercy, had commanded them to come. And then what powers they had! Operations performed under chloroform produced never-ending wonder. A chief’s wife was brought whose only chance of recovery was through a painful and dangerous operation. Her husband and his friends were present. This is how they described the scene: “First the white man killed the woman, and when she was quite dead then he cut the trouble out; then he bound up the wound and made it better; then he brought the woman back to life again.” These medical operations were veritable miracles to these simple savages.

The preaching was at first simple enough, quiet talks, till at last some glimpses of the truth were conveyed. Now preaching goes on on a large scale. Most of the people live in villages “hidden away in the endless forests, like birds’ nests in a wood, at once in terror of one another and of the slaver their common foe”. These people must have the Gospel preached to them; the missionaries are unable to visit them all, or only at long intervals; so there is a native preachers’ class at Bandawe. It meets



on Friday, and forty or fifty attend,—for the African is a born talker, and can soon be taught to preach. There sits the missionary with his preachers around him; the text or passage of Scripture is carefully studied; the heads of the address, the textual references, and the illustrations are written out on a blackboard, and are copied into the preachers' note-books; and on the Sabbath these preachers are scattered over all the villages around, and the Word is preached to nearly 2000 people.

Schools mean school-books, and when our missionaries went to Nyasaland none of the many languages spoken in the country had been reduced to writing. So our missionaries had to write and print lessons in a tongue that had never previously been written down. No less than seven languages have been mastered; and portions of the Bible, *Harry's Catechism*, Hymns, &c., are translated and are used as school-books.

The spread of industrial work has always attracted the attention of strangers. Some years ago when H.M. Commissioner Johnston visited Bandawe, he wrote:—"Altogether, Bandawe, with its little colony of five Europeans, its large school of native children, its dependent villages of friendly natives, and its general air of brisk industry and cheerful comfort, is one of the most agreeable and creditable results of British missionary enterprise which ever gladdened the eyes of a traveller weary with the monotonous savagery of African wilds. . . . Dr. Laws is a doctor of medicine and a practised surgeon. He possesses a well-stocked dispensary, and heals the diseases of an ever-widening circle of natives, besides being the principal medical adviser to all the Europeans on Nyasa. This man, with his fifteen years of whole-hearted devotion to Nyasaland, and his energy in doing good, which has made him learn to make bricks himself in order to teach others; which has led him to become a practical engineer, carpenter, joiner, printer, farrier, boat-builder, and druggist, so that he might instruct his once savage pupils in these arts and trades; which has made him study medicine and surgery to heal the bodies, and sufficient theology to instruct the minds of these Africans, about whom he never speaks with silly sentiment and gush, but whose faults, failings, and capabilities he appraises with calm common sense; Dr. Laws, with these qualities of truly Christian self-devotion, should justly be regarded as the greatest man who has yet appeared in Nyasaland."

In his report sent last year to the Foreign Office, Commissioner Johnston again referred to the work done at Bandawe and in the Angoni highlands, and declares that our missionaries prevented the total extirpation of the Atonga tribe by the fierce Angoni; that they have transformed these Atonga

into a nation of workers, who send down to the plantations in the Shiré highlands nearly 2000 of the best workmen, and provide the bulk of the porters and irregular police at all the European stations between Nyasa and Tanganyika.

While all these things must show the great influence of our Mission as a civilizing agency, even stronger proof comes with the latest news from Angoni-land. The Gospel has completely broken the old war organization of the Angoni; they, too, are becoming a nation of workers. What Mr. Cecil Rhodes could effect with their kinsmen the Matebele only by Maxim guns and by charges of cavalry troops, our missionaries have accomplished in Angoni-land by the quiet preaching of the Word of God.

The young chief of the northern division of the Angoni was first a pupil, then a teacher in the Mission School. At first it seemed as if his adherence to Christianity would make him lose his rights to the chiefship, but in the end he was recognized; and one of his first acts, after what

may be called his coronation, was to return to the missionaries for more instruction. Most of the young men are abandoning the old heathen marriages, and the solemn rite of Christian marriage has been introduced. The missionaries are asked to pray for a good harvest when the crops are sown, and harvest is celebrated by thanksgiving services. A small church of earnest Christians has been formed, which would doubtless be much larger did not our missionaries sternly exclude all polygamists from the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

We may sum up the work that has been done in the following brief sentences; but words are poor things to describe the marvellous realities of the case.



NATIVE STOREHOUSE FOR GRAIN.

For twenty years the history of the Mission has been one continuous effort, in which many noble workers have laid down their lives, to bring the Gospel to the tribes on the west side and north end of the lake, and on the adjoining highlands. The one station of 1875 has become *seven* stations, manned by European missionaries, each having out-stations in numbers, and commanding a range of 500 miles in length.

NATIVE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS have been formed at five stations, the largest at Bandawe, with 120 communicants; and classes for natives anxious to make a profession of faith in baptism are formed and taught regularly at all the stations—some of these classes having seventy members.

SEVEN LANGUAGES have been reduced to writing; books in them have been prepared and printed at the Mission Press by native printers. The whole of the NEW TESTAMENT and part of the OLD have been translated and printed in one, and the GOSPEL OF ST. MARK in other three languages.

FORTY SCHOOLS are now open, taught by 150 native teachers, at which over 7000 children are taught to read, and instructed in the Christian faith.

EVANGELISTIC WORK is done by over a hundred native preachers, some of whom travel ten miles to conduct services in the villages.

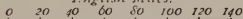
SLAVE-HUNTING, TRIBAL RAIDS, and the POISON ORDEAL have been almost abolished within a great part of the sphere of the mission, and the dying prayer of Livingstone has been answered for this part of Africa.

The seed sown in tears and watered by the blood of many martyrs has yielded an almost unhopd-for harvest. Scarcely any mission has such a record of blessing as this LIVINGSTONIA MISSION of the Free Church of Scotland. Its success calls for profound gratitude to God, and for increased efforts for the extension of His kingdom.

Our very success has become our perplexity. The Livingstonia Mission does not share in the ordinary mission funds of the Church, and has from the beginning been supported by special contributions. These have averaged about £4000 a year, a sum which was amply sufficient in its earlier years, but which is now wholly inadequate. The development of the Mission urgently demands an INSTITUTION, on the model of Lovedale, where preachers, teachers, and artisans can be taught. Dr. Laws is at present actively engaged in carrying this out at Kondowi. If the Mission is to be maintained, its income cannot be estimated at less than £7000.

We trust and pray that all those who have the extension of the Redeemer's





Kingdom at heart will consecrate some of their money to the Lord, and to support this marvellous fulfilment of the dying prayer of one of His noblest servants, David Livingstone.



THE ZAMBESI—NATIVE VILLAGE IN THE FOREGROUND.

Our missionaries in Livingstonia are:—

Dr. ROBERT LAWS, Kondowi.  
 Dr. WALTER ELMSLIE, Ekwendeni.  
 Dr. KERR CROSS, Ngerenge.  
 Dr. GEORGE PRENTICE, Bandawe.  
 Rev. A. G. MACALPINE, Bandawe.  
 Rev. A. DEWAR, Mwenzo, Fife.  
 Rev. J. HENDERSON, Bandawe.  
 Rev. DONALD FRASER.  
 Dr. J. C. RAMSAY.  
 Mr. PETER M'CALLUM, Hora.

Mr. W. MURRAY, Bandawe.  
 Mr. C. STEWART, Njuyu.  
 Mr. W. THOMSON, Bandawe.  
 Mr. GEORGE AITKEN, Karongas.  
 Mr. A. C. SCOTT, Ekwendeni.  
 Mr. W. G. ROBERTSON, Bandawe.  
 Mr. W. DUFF MACGREGOR, Kondowi.  
 Mr. MALCOLM MOFFAT, Kondowi.  
 Miss STEWART, Ekwendeni.